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Awakening Of The Dead

by FELover

Summary

Nothing for miles. Just the road ahead. He's been walking, ceaselessly, towards his own death.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

Robin looked with longing at the barely 12 milliliters of murky water at the bottom of his bottle. Five days ago he saw a puddle in the middle of the road, and its water had looked safe enough to drink. He filled two of his three bottles, used half a bottle to wash his face, because when he saw his own reflection on the window of a dilapidated shop days prior he noticed with horror that he couldn't tell the difference between his face and those of the corpses.

He probably should have rationed his supplies better.

His head was pounding, so hot under the merciless summer sun that he could maybe fry an egg on it. He wished he had eggs. All he had now was that foul smelling jerky crap he found in a corpse's pocket. Thinking back on it, he shouldn't have bothered killing the ugly bastard again. It wasn't any threat to him. It was trapped, its lower body crushed under a rusty Land Rover's wheel. And Robin wondered if crashes were still possible in the midst of their... *his* ruined world. Or maybe that one had died long, long ago.

It was a really ugly one. Possibly the ugliest he'd ever seen. Thick-headed, spindly fingers, bony, blue-green chest peeking out under its tattered clothes. And he really shouldn't have bothered. But it was just so ugly. And its broken groans really got to him. To the point he saw red and had to stick his tactical pen right through its horrible, leaking skull. It was by chance the jerky fell onto the cracked pavement. His vision stopped being blurry long enough to notice. And that got him this far.

At least he managed to get far enough from the swarm. He could have stayed back in Plymouth. Tucked in a safe corner inside the old motel. But then they came and they were many and persistent. Like starved vultures. They filled houses to the brim, tore through decaying wood and crashed into doors hard enough that the hinges came off. He hadn't even had enough time to pack more of his reserves.

He even forgot her picture.

He really could have stayed. Except he didn't like the poor song it would've made to end up as a toothpick for the undead. He'd rather melt in the middle of the forgotten moorlands. In the middle of nowhere.

But no. He wasn't in the middle of nowhere. He remembered a sign. Miles ago. *Lychway* - that's what it'd read. Lychway. Kind of fitting. *Lyche* meant corpse, but colloquially, it was known as the Road of The Dead.

Not many people knew that.

The ones who knew were probably dead.

Everyone was.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The earth caved under him. He could remember the swirling sun and the odd sensation of fading away. It was no dramatic shit. He really felt himself lose substance. He was clumsy like a towering edifice falling under its own colossal weight. He fell hard on his side, felt his cheek crash against the hardness of the road and attempted futilely to shake away the drowsiness. The shadows took over his vision, licking at the corners until there was only a small dot of color in the middle.

That, too, vanished.

"I'll try to get there by Saturday," Robin spoke into the phone, his eyes distracted as he looked himself over in the full body mirror propped against his closet door. He reconsidered his jeans. Kept patting down a stubborn strand of hair that didn't like playing by Newton's rules, "but I still gotta drop Gaius on the way. I'm calculating at least a day of delay. If the roads get frozen."

His mom sounded disappointed on the other side.

"That's too bad honey. Your uncle Marc really wanted to see you, but I don't think he can stay that long. He's thinking of pushing his flight back to London sooner as well."

Robin sighed. "It's been a long time since I last saw him. I wanted to talk to him in person too. Is he really in such a hurry?"

"Maree hasn't been feeling too well and her mom hospitalized her just yesterday. Marc wants to be there in case the baby's born sooner than expected."

"Oh. Is she alright? When's it due?"

"Couple of weeks. The baby's just restless, but so were you back when I was expecting you and I had you two months before the planned date, so you never know. Why are you giving this guy a ride again?"

"I never told you about Gaius, did I? He's in a Spanish course with me."

"He's a good friend of yours?"

"Yes mom." Robin stressed, "He's a decent guy. Kind of a clown... but he's okay. His hometown's Gassendi. It's very known around here. Even though it's kinda far from campus."

"Never heard of it."

"Really? It holds a huge pie festival during March. Home to the largest chocolate coin. Alleged cradle of The Beatles. "

"Sounds legit. What a landmark."

Robin laughed. A satisfied smile on his face when his hair decided to finally behave. He leaned on his bedside table. He still had about an hour.

"Why are you giving this guy a ride anyway?"

"I offered to take him. His car broke down last week."

"What's wrong with it?"

"Carburetor. He has to get a new carb fitted but he's gotta buy more books for another class of his as well. You know how it is."

"Mmm... just be careful on the road."

"I will. It's going to be just fine. Don't worry about it."

He heard a dry cough. A distant sound. She probably didn't want him to hear and got the phone away from her face. Robin refrained from making a comment. She kept snapping that it was just a cold.

"That sounds okay. If you really trust him though, you can just fly here and lend him your car while winter break lasts."

"I don't like the weather." Robin said, looking out the window. "It's been nothing but blizzard after bloody blizzard these past weeks. At least the cold gets milder the further you drive south of College City. And the roads aren't really that bad."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah. Sorry I can't make it there sooner..."

"You could if you left earlier. I'm sure your friend wouldn't mind changing the schedule-"

"Well," Robin felt his throat closing up. He rubbed his sweaty hand on his jacket and bit his lips nervously. "I've been meaning to tell you... I met this girl."

Robin waited for a response. But after seconds of silence decided to continue.

"She's an exchange student. Real smart. She's number one in her Statistics class." But she's thinking of transferring to a local institute of antiques. You probably wouldn't approve. So I'm keeping that from you for now. *" I've been... kinda seeing her for some time. Her parents are visiting and she wanted me to meet them. So. I'm staying to say hi, at least."*

His mom breathed out heavily.

"You never tell me things anymore honey. I wish you would have told me about this girl before."

Robin exhaled ruefully. His throat bone dry.

"I'm not mad. I'm just kind of sad. When did you start keeping secrets from me?"

"Come on, mom. It's not that big a deal. If anything, I didn't want to tell because I didn't wanna jinx it."

"It must be pretty serious if you're telling me now though."

"Yeah..." Robin mumbled under his breath.

"What's that hon?"

"I was going to ask you..." His voice was a jerky mess. "Remember the ring grandma said-"

His mom's voice blew excitedly. "Robin, are you serious?!"

Robin laughed tremulously. He rubbed at his neck."I'm in love mom. I'm gonna ask her to marry me."

"Honey! I'm so happy for you! You haven't even told me her name though!"

"Her name's-"

In the background, Robin could hear a muffled male voice. Someone asking about the commotion. His mom shouted back the news.

There was a scratching sound on the other side.

"Kid. Robin. It's me, uncle Marc."

It was uncle Marc. Dragging his cockney all over.

"Yor mum just told me. Congrats! See, I knew yer'd find a pretty gal once yer went off ter college. There's a bettin' pool in the bleedin' family, did yer know?"

Robin rubbed his forehead. His laugh less shaky.

"You gotta be joking. A betting pool?"

"Well, it's just between me and yor aunt, but I won guv! I just knew. I knew..."

Robin's smile widened by a mile.

Yeah. Uncle Marc always knew.

When his sticky eyelids pulled apart, just a fraction of an inch, he saw new color. No longer just the unending cups of towering trees lining the road at both sides. There were two shadows. Hovering like planets precariously out of orbit. They blabbered mutely among themselves. Some gibberish Robin couldn't really make out or care for.

He thought he was dreaming.

But then they noticed him in his half-sentient state and grew excited. Robin thought himself a Christmas gift what with the looks they were giving him. And fear kicked in, sharp and smothering.

They were gonna tear him open.

He sprung, full of tension. Clumsy, ragged hands digging into pockets and feet kicking at anything that tried getting a hold of him. He landed some nasty blows, but he failed to notice the large body stalking him in at his back. He pulled out his pen in a panic when he saw the dreary shadow that draped over him from behind. It was useless. His arms were suddenly pinned at his sides, wrapped by a pair of steely, undead arms.

Repeat that—*undead*.

Robin thrashed. With as much strength as any dehydrated worm could muster.

"Stop that!"

One voice kept saying something. It sounded like... words. Normal words. When was the last time he heard *words*?

"Frederick let go! He's barely awake and you're squeezing the crap out of him!"

And names. They were saying names.

"Get back Liz."

Robin clutched the pen tighter. Its machined steel body leaving dents in his calloused skin. He wasn't processing things properly. He growled.

He *growled*.

Two big hands took his head and forced him to look up.

"Listen," the voiced said. Male. Young. Nonthreatening. "Snap out of it. Frederick here's gonna kick your head in otherwise." Alright. Maybe just a bit threatening.

And then there was a face to whom the voice belonged. This was no rotten alley-crawler. This one wasn't snapping its teeth. This one he could bare to look at. This was a real live man.

This was like a fairy tale.

Chapter End Notes

> Eh. So cockney accent. What do you think of the flashbacks? Love it, hate it? Expect more of my amateurish writing skills! X)

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They took his pen. They didn't really search him, because weak as he was he could barely sit upright. Let alone do a surprise attack. He was practically comatose. And he'd almost been crushed to death by a bear of a man. Said man had expressed something close to amusement having seen the old thing. He now stood at one side, deep bundle of furrows between his eyebrows and hand poised at one pouch of his security belt. He looked every bit the butcher. His name was Frederick. Chrom informed him. That was the other man in the trio. Though still armed, he was less of an eyesore. He looked like a freegan. Not quite sketchy. And the woman... Lissa? The one that wouldn't shut up at first. The one with tails on her head and expert hands and a knife so pitiful it looked only useful for cutting up lettuce.

She was alright. She knew what she was doing. And she was the one who handed him a canteen first.

Protective instincts. Motherly smile.

A doctor or nurse. Something of that kind.

Robin, sitting and gulping down water like a neglected child thirsting for the breast, almost choked when Lissa brushed his coat's storm hood back and pulled his face up, into her hands, and peered into his nose. Her eyes squinted in the dim light. Sundown was near.

"When was the last time you urinated?" she asked, ponderous face shadowed.

Robin stared confusedly, and this for some reason made Lissa very interested in his pupils. She lifted a dainty hand and tapped him on the forehead, making him blink and jerk back. Chrom knelt and pushed him back up with one palm on his back.

"Have you cried recently?"

Strange questions. Robin tried answering, but his mouth still felt sticky and dry.

Lisa pinched his arm.

Robin grunted.

"What the...!"

Her hand went to rest on his forehead.

"He's got a fever." she spoke to Chrom, her voice sounded younger after her checkup. "He's dehydrated and malnourished. That's all. Surprisingly."

Robin didn't see it, but Chrom was looking relieved at hearing those words.

"How long have you been on this road?" he asked.

Lissa sent him a sisterly glare. Robin could tell. He still remembered how sisters could glare, oddly enough.

"He's out of it. Don't push him."

Chrom grasped Robin's shoulder and sat at his side. He gave him a tentative squeeze and a tight smile. He knew the look of a man who has lost things; he used to see it reflected on surfaces for a while.

"Are you alone?"

Robin nodded, "Yes."

"How long have you been alone?"

Robin's eyes glazed for a moment. He felt himself drift apart again. There was something there, hanging in the air. Some kind of melancholy. Maybe some hatred for the question. Or maybe even some kind of love. It might have been nothing. He shrugged it off.

"I forgot... Very long."

"Weeks?"

"Longer."

"Months?"

Robin swallowed thickly.

"It's okay," Lissa spoke again. She was guiding the canteen back to his mouth. "Just drink."

All the while Frederick stood, watching with detached interest. Lamppost rigid. He only seemed to react when Chrom sent him *that* questioning look. The *'He's alone and spent and still survived.'* look.

Frederick sighed.

"Who are you?" Robin rasped.

"We're just people," Chrom answered, "trying to get by. Or, wait... you mean our names? Did you just forget? Liz..."

Robin dangled his head *no*. His head felt so heavy he couldn't even look up. "No. I remember... Chrom. Where did you come from?"

"We have a camp-"

"Chrom." Frederick's voice boomed. Every inch of his body was tense, the way he always felt whenever Chrom got into good Samaritan mode. It wasn't often they found survivors, nearly none for nearly half a year now, so he still hadn't had enough time to practice trusting complete strangers. Though he figured if Chrom was going to be the reckless one, he needed a good skeptic at his side. He had to remember they all had roles.

"A camp?" Robin repeated. If there was any distaste in his voice, Chrom didn't notice.

"It's not too far from here. Not even half a mile."

Frederick stepped closer, his shadow looming.

"He's tired Frederick," Chrom provided, looking over his shoulder. "We're not leaving him out

here."

"We have more than enough." Frederick responded cryptically. "He's hanging by a thread-"

"Hey!" Lissa spoke up. "He can make it. I *know*."

With shaky legs, and little of a haze, Robin got to his feet.

"Thanks for the water," he said. "I appreciate it."

He handed the empty canteen back to Lissa, who sputtered in dismay when he staggered away. He looked like a drunken hobo, pathetically trying to pat the dust off of his ratty coat.

"Wait, don't mind Frederick over there. You can come with us!"

Chrom rushed to pull Robin by the arm. He needed very little force to stop him.

"You're really going to die if you keep going. Come on man. I know we're strangers. But look all around you; who else are you going to trust if not us? We have a camp, and it's a good place," he started smiling. "It's not much, I'll admit... but we do what we can. We have food. We grow our own. And we have clothes to spare for you."

He looked up and down. The man looked grubbier than anyone he'd met before, but that was no surprise considering how long he might have wandered, with nothing or no one to care for or who cared for him...

"We're a group of 8. Soon to be 9."

Robin turned around, something close to interest in his face, and Frederick scowled. Except he had no reason to. Robin was just remembering something.

"Can I have my pen back? It may not look like much. But it's what I've got."

Chrom pursed his lips with determination.

"We make it together. We all do our part." he nodded towards Lissa. "She's my sister. She's a paramedic"

Ah.

"And Frederick-he used to be a policeman. He got us through a lot. And back in the camp we have a guy who used to be a cook. He's name is Stahl. He's good at what he does."

Robin blinked a couple of times. Somewhat drowsy.

"There's also Sully. Man, she's a hell of a mechanic. She fixed a few cars for us."

Robin was about to get on his path again.

"And Gaius-he's like our own Saxton Pope. Cordelia is-"

Robin froze. His feet suddenly weighed a ton, but he still he was wept out of time. Out of Now, as if the utterance of a ghost's name was enough to turn back time. If that was the case, Robin would have chanted her name a thousand thousand times already.

But there was *no way*. Gaius was dead. He *should* be dead. He'd *seen*...

He remembered the call. The static. The world was falling apart. There was no time.

'This is no fucking joke Gaius! Have you seen what's coming your way? This is fucking happening. Get your ass out of Gassendi and head north. North. To the Rockies. You hear me? Go fucking north... I'm telling you...!'

'Robin... man. Listen... I can't... You know I can't... gotta stay... There's nobody else...'

Chrom kept saying stuff.

'Let's get your mom Robin.' She'd said. *'She's stranded. And you heard him.'*

'Fucking idiot!'

'Robin...'

'He's dead! He's dead if he stays!'

'It's his choice. Let him do as he will. You can't stop him.'

Robin choked air in.

"Gaius..."

Nobody heard him. He spun on his heels with ungraceful, stuttering feet. He moved so fast he lost balance and started feeling light-headed again.

He plummeted onto Chrom's chest and clung. Chrom helped him up. He looked down at him. Startled.

"Say that name again."

Chapter End Notes

A big thank you to HellfireSupremacy, for the neat ideas he mentioned in a review in FanFiction.net

End Notes

Interesting? No? Who knows. I was just feeling like writing something zombie-ish. Plus. Robin's the best. Specially somber Robin.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!